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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **National Teen Driver Safety Week Calls for Positive Learning Approach**

The California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) is calling upon teen drivers and motorists alike to not only focus on safe driving habits during the week of Oct. 14-20, National Teen Driver Safety Week, but to make an ongoing effort to continue to practice caution throughout the year. OTS remains diligent in its safety and prevention efforts for teens year round, but aims to increase awareness among teens and parents during this week of observance.

“National Teen Driver Safety Week is about bringing awareness to the well-being of newly licensed teen drivers that are hitting America’s roadways,” Christopher J. Murphy, Director of the Office of Traffic Safety said. “By encouraging cautious and responsible driving habits among teens, we are helping to create safer roadways for everyone.”

This year marks the sixth year of nationwide observance, encouraging long-term behavior changes through safe driving education and communication efforts aimed specifically at teens. The theme of this year’s events is ‘Share, Not Scare,’ focusing more on learning and sharing positive behaviors rather than the graphic crash themes that grab attention of everyone, but may only have a lasting effect on a few.

The number of motor vehicle fatalities among teens in California age 16 to 20 has decreased 56.5 percent, from 563 in 2006 to 245 in 2010. While these numbers were on the decline, officials worry that the increase in overall fatalities in 2011 may eventually be seen in teen deaths. OTS recognizes the importance of continued safety messaging, as each year more teens receive both driving permits and licenses in California.

According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, analysis of crash data indicates that fatal crashes involving teenage drivers are more likely due to driver error. By using positive messages, consistently encouraging safe behavior, and being a positive role-model themselves, parents can make a serious impact in lowering the number of crashes and fatalities among teen drivers.

For more information on *National Teen Driver Safety Week* and other tips on keeping teens safe behind the wheel, visit the California Office of Traffic Safety at [www.ots.ca.gov](http://www.ots.ca.gov), the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) at [www.nhtsa.gov](http://www.nhtsa.gov), and Impact Teen Drivers at [www.impactteendrivers.org](http://www.impactteendrivers.org).